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attention to the books which err with regard to the skimmed and weak character of their introductions, lack of literary criticism, or absence of philological notes, for they are legion.

However, as was said before, all text-books are not bad, and indeed some are very excellent. A series of French text-books¹ which is being brought out by Scott, Foresman & Co., deserves particular attention. First of all, the publishers have hit upon the very good idea that isolated texts are well-nigh useless, and they are publishing a nicely arranged and well-selected series of works from the most representative authors of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. It is to be hoped that this work will be continued, and that in the near future the "Lake Series" may be conscientiously recommended to the student as a fairly representative and not too meager anthology of French literature. It is worth noting that in these texts, which include selections from Molière, Beaumarchais, Hugo, Voltaire, and Chateaubriand, very great stress is laid upon an introduction which presents in concise form (generally occupying 50 pages) the life of the author, discusses the historical importance of the movement to which he belongs, indicates his place in that movement, and makes a critical study of the play as a piece of literature. Another thing which must be said in favor of these texts is that the more important characters in the selections are generally made the subject of a short character-study, thus aiding the student very materially in an intensive study of the selections. Excellent, however, as the "Lake Series" is, it might be very much enhanced in value by the addition of occasional philological notes. One text which has introduced this feature with most beneficial results is *La Mare au Diable*.²

We have tried to show that the purpose of the study of a language is to become master of some small part of its literature, rather than to know little or nothing about a very wide range; then to show the beneficial effect which a more concentrated method would have upon both teacher and pupil, to criticise existing courses and texts in the relation they bear to the object of the study of a language, and lastly to point out what seems to us a series of texts which with a few slight emendations would leave little to be desired by either teacher or pupil.

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SOME FRENCH GRAMMARS.

Is THE instruction given in French in our schools at the present time the result of a regular growth and development, the object in view having been always the same, or would the history of this instruction be a story of experiments in methods and of a standard of attainment not clearly established? Doubtless the truth lies between the two extremes. To say that French is taught, even now, with a single purpose in view would be as far from the facts as to affirm that the manner

¹ MOLIÈRE, *Le Misanthrope, L'Avare*; by GIESE; \$0.50. BEAUMARCHAIS, *Le Barbier de Séville and Lettres*; by FAIRFIELD; \$0.50. HUGO, *Préface de Cromwell, Hernani*; by EFFINGER; \$0.50. VOLTAIRE, *Zaire, Épîtres*; by EGGERT; \$0.50. CHATEAUBRIAND, *Atala, René*; by BOWEN; \$0.50.

² *La Mare au Diable*, edited by LEIGH R. GREGOR. Boston: Ginn & Co.

of reaching the desired end is always the same. And yet there is greater uniformity in both manner and purpose than there has been at any time before. Various causes have worked together to produce this result, among others and most important of all, perhaps, the fact that a reading knowledge of the language is less and less held to be sufficient. Thus, whereas until recently the student who was preparing for college examinations might frequently satisfy the requirements by giving proof of the ability to translate simple French into English, he must usually now show a more intimate acquaintance with the language. Again, the demand grows constantly stronger that those who graduate from our schools shall be able to use their knowledge of the language in practical ways, to speak French or write French correctly, in social intercourse or in business. In this way public sentiment, appealed to largely by practical considerations, and the demands of the colleges are beginning to coincide with the ideals which the best teachers have kept steadily before them.

If the conditions above described are real, we should expect to find them reflected in the text-books used at the present time, and particularly in the French grammars, since the word "grammar," so used, indicates not only a formal description of the parts of speech and of constructions, but also a text-book for beginners. That this is actually the case there seems to be no doubt. A consideration of some grammars recently published, with a brief reference to one or two of earlier date, will show more clearly the nature of the development which has been taking place.

When Whitney's *French Grammar* was published, in 1887, the first step was taken, or it may be an already existing tendency was reinforced, toward that purely formal instruction in French which has done so little credit to our schools. The book was founded on Otto's *French Conversation Grammar*, first published in this country in 1864. It is difficult to see that the model was in any way improved upon, and certainly the life of the older grammar, which was an exceedingly good piece of work, was in some part lost. Sentences composed with little regard for anything but the grammatical drill they afforded made up the exercises, and the written language everywhere prevailed over the speech of daily life. Nevertheless, it was a scholarly production, worthy of the position and reputation of its distinguished author, and, in spite of its defects, it was very widely used.

A step in the same general direction, away from the study of the spoken language, was the reducing of the "first part," as it appeared in Otto's and in Whitney's grammar, to its lowest terms, the object being to present the essentials of French grammar in the simplest possible form as a step to early and rapid reading. This has nowhere been better done than in Edgren's *French Grammar*,¹ published about 1890. A short first part, containing an admirably clear and concise statement of the forms and construction of the language, with correspondingly simple exercises, is followed by a second part, equally clear in statement, in which the principles of grammar and syntax are more fully treated. The book was prepared, as stated in the preface, "with special reference to the needs of our American schools and colleges," and, the first part especially, with the purpose of enabling the pupil "to begin reading with profit at the earliest practicable moment — or in from three to six weeks." That there will always be a certain number who desire, for special reasons, to obtain a reading knowledge of French in as rapid and economical a

¹ *A Compendious French Grammar*. By A. H. EDGREN. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co. \$1.12.

manner as possible is well-nigh certain. For these a better book could hardly be prepared. To such purposes, however, it is, to some extent, limited. It is probably not a book to be used to the best advantage in schools where a thorough training in French or a thorough foundation for later study, is possible.

We come now to two books, differing widely in method, but representing, each of them, the principles to which our best teachers have always held; one of them well known, and very generally used ever since its first publication in this country some ten or twelve years ago; the other more recently published, but with a position already assured — the grammars of Chardenal,¹ and Fraser and Squair.²

In Chardenal's Grammar the familiar division into two parts is practically lost. For the sake of convenience it was, and probably still is, published in England in two volumes, but the second part is a continuation of the first in quite a different sense from that to which we are accustomed in other works of the kind. Indeed, in the American edition in one volume the division is not apparent. Evidently the author has carried out his work on a different principle. In the first place, it should be noticed that there is no intention here of preparing the pupil for rapid reading. This is apparent from the fact that the irregular verbs do not appear until well beyond the second half of the book. Even then these verbs are not taken up in a body, or in such a way as to be rapidly learned, but singly and in connection with the general development of grammar and syntax. This is done, not as a matter of convenience, but because of the conviction of the author that it is the best way and the shortest in the end. "Believing," he says, "that one or two rules, given along with each verb, will keep up their interest in a most profitable way, I have inserted all the principal rules of syntax in that part of the book, and compiled exercises suited both to the verbs and to the rules." In a general way this is the principle on which the book as a whole is constructed. Scientific arrangement is subordinated to the desire to present the facts in the simplest and most attractive manner. It is in accordance with the same purpose that the sentences which accompany each lesson are numerous and as easy as it is practicable to make them. A single rule or a single new form is illustrated again and again in sentences in both languages. Thus, though it is necessary to cover something more than two hundred and fifty pages to complete the outline, the pupil who has accomplished the task has had a training in French such as cannot be obtained from the study of any other single book. An objection frequently made is that neither the American pupil nor the American teacher has the patience necessary for such work, that reading *must* be begun as early as possible in the course, because in this way only is the student's interest aroused and the rapid progress made of which he is capable. The question is an open one, though it may fairly be said that the number of those who hold this opinion is smaller than it was ten years ago, that the pendulum seems to be swinging in the other direction, and that it may be that the slower and less exhilarating way is the better.

One question remains. Is it, by any chance, possible to combine the advantages of such different systems as those represented by the two books last mentioned, Edgren's Grammar and Chardenal's Grammar? Can early reading, if it is desired

¹ *Complete French Course*. By C. A. CHARDENAL. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. \$1.

² *A French Grammar*. By H. W. FRASER AND J. SQUAIR. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co. \$1.12.

by the teacher, be made possible without sacrificing the thoroughness of training which is indispensable to any real attainment? It was, apparently, with the belief that this question could be answered in the affirmative that Fraser and Squair's *French Grammar* was prepared.

Part I of this book, as stated in the preface, "consists of a series of lessons on the elements of grammar as an essential preparation for easy reading, while Part II furnishes a systematic grammar of modern French for later study and general reference." Further explanation is made as follows: The elementary exercises are based almost exclusively upon connected pieces of French, dealing with a variety of topics relating to everyday life, and make provision for both oral and written practice. They have been provided in abundance so as to admit of selection and variety, and to afford ample material for review." The plan sounds attractive, and the actual accomplishment is not less so. For this is the most modern of grammars. The chapter on pronunciation embodies all the results of the late scientific study of this subject, and the phonetic symbols of the International Association are given with each new word and each inflection which is learned. The vocabularies, which accompany the first twenty lessons, are made up of the words most likely to occur in the language of every day. The sentences, also, are meant to have a living interest. They are, in general, divided into four parts—the first for translation, the second for practice in verb forms, the third for conversation, and the fourth for written work. In this manner the first part is carried out, an outline of grammar, including the conjugation of the regular verb and the primary tenses of a few common irregular verbs, being completed in thirty-nine lessons, or about one hundred and ten pages. With the second part comes the complete table of verbs, regular and irregular, and later the details of grammar and syntax. Of this part of the book it is unnecessary to say much at present, except to note that it is complete and very clear in expression and arrangement. Finally there are some exercises to afford practice on the irregular verbs and on the principles laid down in the second part generally.

Such is the form of the book. What now of its value? Has it reconciled and united the two systems, or is it but a kind of compromise, and therefore in some measure unsatisfactory? Doubtless time alone will answer the question with authority, but it is already possible to balance the merits of the book against its failings, and so to indicate the position which it is likely to hold.

It is with the end of Part I that the first serious doubt arises. So far the execution has been admirable, though it may be noted in passing that the sentences increase in length and in difficulty somewhat too rapidly for the average pupil, and that connected prose in elementary work is too attractive not to be dangerous. In general, however, no fault is to be found with the arrangement, nor is it greatly different from that of Chardenal's Grammar. With the table of irregular verbs at the beginning of Part II, however, there is a distinct departure from the principles laid down in the latter grammar. Is the author of the older book wrong, then, when he says that the pupil who learns these verbs one after another loses interest and fails to get real benefit from the work? It is true that there are, as noted above, exercises on the forms (not really on the use of these verbs), but these afford, at best, only a kind of mental gymnastics to which the necessary life and atmosphere is quite lacking. The second part of this book is different, then, only in its details from the second part

of Edgren's Grammar. It is "for later study and general reference," and not really a continuation of Part I, which we found at once thorough and inspiring.

So the question remains unanswered. Whether or not it is possible, without increasing the size of the book beyond measure, to combine the merits of the two systems is by no means certain. The later grammar does make early reading possible, at the same time that it provides, up to a certain point, the foundation for a real knowledge of the language. It may be that beyond this point the burden can best be taken up by some other book. The text for early reading may make provision for the training which the grammar does not supply. Indeed, there are already indications that such will be the case. The important point, after all, is that the great majority of teachers are agreed as to the training which they wish their pupils to have and as to the demands which they will make of the text-books. For thoroughness of instruction Chardenal's Grammar continues to be a standard; for attractiveness and for the qualities of real life which the modern book must have Fraser and Squair's Grammar bids fair to set another standard.

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First French Book according to the "New Method" of Teaching Modern Languages. By D. MACKAY AND F. J. CURTIS. London and New York: Whittaker & Co., 1903. Pp. xvi + 321, 8vo.

PERHAPS the term "New Method" as used on the title-page of this work is somewhat misleading, inasmuch as the absolutely new features of it are few. If the method deserves the term "new" at all, it is by reason of its novel and scientific readaptation and reorganization of the older processes and methods.

This book is an attempt to present to beginners the elements of the French language in practically the same way in which it has been so successfully taught for over a decade in German schools. It is one of the first attempts to provide English schools with a manual of the "Direct Method." We hasten to say, lest injustice be done to the authors, that in the Direct Method more than in any other the book is only one blade to the shears. It must have another to cut against, namely the teacher. The book depends for its success very largely on the teacher. It merely provides materials; the teacher is supposed to give the necessary life and interest to the instruction and recitation. The material consists of songs, riddles, very didactic anecdotes, and pictures. These latter deserve more than mere mention. While they are more elaborate than any gracing our natural method manuals of twenty years ago, they are by no means triumphs of the engraver's art. We venture to say that no house in the United States would publish so poorly illustrated a book.

For a class of little girls this would be an ideal text-book. The authors have adapted it to the need of schools in which children begin early the study of French and continue in the rudiments for several years before they undertake reading. If our schools could in like manner extend this elementary work over two years early in the curriculum, our gain would be great. It is perhaps possible that the 150 easy exercises of this book could be finished by a class in a year. Still so young a book as this would not be suited in subject-matter for a class mature enough to progress at such a rate. The great pity is that in our schools we have so few classes starting early